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Des Plaines

FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA

CONSERVATION

THE AREA

Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area is one of the largest and most used recreation areas in the state. The area offers a variety of activities including camping, picnicking, fishing, boating, hunting, dog training, field trailing, and trap shooting.

The area is located on I-55 approximately 10 miles south of Joliet and 55 miles southwest of Chicago. Access is readily available from the Wilmington exit on I-55. More than 4,900 acres, approximately 200 of which are water, make up Des Plains Fish and Wildlife Area. The major portion of the area has been purchased by the State of Illinois since 1955.

NATURAL FEATURES

The Kankakee River borders the area on the south providing 1.5 miles of shoreline. The bodies of water in and adjacent to Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area provide a variety of recreational activities as well as suitable habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife. The acreage is managed to provide land usage compatible with recreational opportunities and wildlife management.

The natural features present for visitor enjoyment are as diverse as the activities. Farmland and woodland, prairie and swamp, water and shoreline offer unlimited opportunity for visiting public and resident wildlife alike.

FACILITIES

Boating — Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area offers a public boat launch on the Kankakee River and boating on the backwaters of the Kankakee River. There is no boating allowed on Milliken Lake.

Boats in the backwater areas are limited to 10 horsepower and below. There is no horsepower limitation on boats launched in the Kankakee River.

Fishing — Open water and ice fishing are both popular and productive. Milliken Lake, various ponds, and the river backwaters provide panfish, catfish, and bass fishing. The Kankakee River offers walleye and northern pike fishing in addition to these species. Boats are allowed on all waters except Milliken Lake.

Camping — Class C camping sites are available in the area. The area is closed to all camping in November and December. No camping is allowed in any area other than the designated campground.

Picnicking — There are two picnic sites on the area. One is located west of I-55 on the Kankakee River upstream from the boat launch; the other is east of I-55 at Milliken Lake. Both provide tables, stoves, and water. The Milliken Lake site also has a large shelter and playground equipment.

Field Trials and Training — The Des Plaines Fish and

Wildlife Area is heavily used throughout the year for field trials and dog training. It is closed to those activities during November and December.

Hunting — Hunting on the area is primarily pheasant hunting on a permit basis. In addition there is a limited amount of deer (bow only), rabbit, and dove hunting. For further information, contact the site superintendent.

All hunting on the area is controlled. Hunters must check in and out daily. Area regulations differ somewhat from the general state hunting regulations. Hunters are responsible for contacting personnel to ensure that they are in accordance with area regulations.

In addition to the permit upland game season, Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area administers the Will County Waterfowl Management Area. Hunting blinds are allocated via drawing. Contact the site superintendent for details.

Nature Preserve — This 80-acre area is a dedicated nature preserve and contains a high quality prairie remnant. The preserve is managed to protect and perpetuate our state's prairie heritage. Visitors are welcome, but please remember that all plants and animals are protected and are not to be disturbed in any way.

Trap Shooting — Two hand trap ranges are available at Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area. They are open daily except during pheasant hunting season and occasional field trial weekends.

Mounted Unit — The training stable for the Department's Mounted Unit is located here. The Mounted Unit has more than 25 trained horses and riders located at various state facilities.

Please — This area is for all to enjoy, so help keep it clean. Put all litter in the nearest available container. No flowers, plants, shrubs, or trees may be removed or damaged. If you need help or have a question, contact the site superintendent.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins, and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, and Giant City; White Pines Forest and Cave-In-Rock have cabins and dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open the year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact Site Superintendent, Rural Route 4, Box 269, Wilmington, IL 60481, phone (815) 423-5326. For information on other Illinois sites, write to the Department of Conservation, Division of Land Management, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, IL 62706.

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